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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.  
Director and Chief Medical Officer

**SUBJECT: DHS NURSING RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

At its March 5, 2002, meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion directing the Director of Health Services (DHS), in collaboration with the Director of Mental Health, the Sheriff, the Health Care Workforce Development Program, and Labor Management to report on issues related to nurse recruitment, retention, and training.

In addition, this is to also provide you with a bi-annual report on the DHS nursing recruitment and retention activities. Since both reports address similar issues, I am combining the two reports into one.

**Tuition Reimbursement/Relocation Incentive Programs**

During the period April 5 – October 24, 2004, there were 36 graduates from the DHS Tutoring & Mentoring Program with the East Los Angeles College – School of Nursing.

As you are aware, in January 2003, the Department implemented a Tuition Reimbursement Program which provides financial assistance to permanent Registered Nurses (RN) attending advanced degree programs at accredited colleges. During the period April 5 – October 24, 2004, the Nurse Recruitment Office, in cooperation with each facility Chief Nursing Officer and Nurse Recruiter, finalized Policy No: 701.3, Nursing Tuition Reimbursement Program. Effective September 15, 2004, the revised policy allows Nursing Administration at each facility and Public Health to administer the program directly, while the DHS Human Resources Nurse Recruitment Office will continue to process applications received from nurses in non-hospital and Public Health settings (e.g., Health Services Administration and Office of Managed Care). It is anticipated that this revision will expedite the processing of claims and distribution of reimbursement checks.

As you may recall, the Department re-established the Registered Nurse Relocation Incentive Program during Fiscal Year 2002-03, which provides financial assistance to RNs who come

to work for DHS for a minimum of one year and who, immediately prior to accepting County employment, maintained permanent legal residence at least 200 miles outside Los Angeles County. During this reporting period, there were no applications submitted for this program.

### **Training Programs To Upgrade Skills**

Additional nursing training opportunities have been developed and implemented through the Health Care Workforce Development Program (HCWDP), an educational partnership between DHS and the Service Employees International Union, Local 660. The HCWDP established a joint Nurse Education Project Team, with the participation of nurse managers, along with staff Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN) representing the hospital clusters.

Listed below are the major highlights during the period April 1, 2004 through November 30, 2004:

- Thirty-two employees continued their Registered Nursing training program at El Camino Community College.
- Ten Licensed Vocational Nurses completed their LVN-to-RN training at East Los Angeles Community College.
- Five employees completed their Licensed Vocational Nurse training at St. Francis Career College.
- A combined twenty-eight employees continued their training to become Licensed Vocational Nurses. The training is being conducted at LAC+USC's School of Nursing and Allied Health and at Olive View/UCLA Medical Center. The students are being taught by instructors from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).
- Ten unlicensed personnel attended a 5-day Basic Dysrhythmia (EKG) training program at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. The class was held October through December 2004.
- Twenty-six nurses, who care for monitored patients, attended a 3-day EKG course at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.
- Seventeen graduating nursing students completed a 10-week, 150-hours specialized course designed to prepare them to pass the State exam for Registered Nurse licensure.
- A combined total of seventy-nine nurses completed specialized nursing skills enhancement training in areas such as EKG interpretation and physical assessments for newborn, pediatric, and adult patients.
- A combined total of sixty-nine employees completed pre-requisite courses that are required for admission to the nursing programs of the local community colleges. The training involved courses in Algebra, Microbiology, Chemistry, and Anatomy.
- Forty-two nurses at the Martin Luther King/Drew Medical Center were trained on

how to properly document the condition and behavior of psychiatric patients to ensure that the correct medical treatment and monitoring plan is followed.

### **Tutoring And Mentoring Program – East Los Angeles Community College (ELAC) School Of Nursing**

As you may recall, the DHS Tutoring/Mentoring Program is designed to improve study skills and enhance the overall learning process so that ELAC nursing students may pass the State Board licensure examination to become registered nurses. The DHS Nurse Recruiters and ELAC nursing staff continue to encourage nursing student graduates to apply for the full time Staff Nurse and Clinic Nurse I positions within the County of Los Angeles health facilities. ELAC graduates seeking part-time employment for personal or educational reasons are encouraged to apply for Relief Nurse positions. DHS has also made significant progress in hiring ELAC nursing students in the position of Student Worker, Nursing; with two Student Nurses being hired at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, and four Student Worker, Nursing applications being received at LAC+USC during this reporting period.

#### **Tutoring and Mentoring Activities:**

Clinicals: The Program at ELAC's School of Nursing conducted 20 weekend clinical rotations at LAC+USC Medical Center during the period April 1 – November 30, 2004. These clinical rotations continue to strengthen the student's clinical skills in small groups within the County hospital setting and provide the students with one-on-one instructor assistance, mini-lectures, and Support Assistance; ELAC's faculty tutors continued to provide mini-lectures in medical, surgical, mental health, and other courses outlined in ELAC's nursing course modules. The rotations included support assistance workshops on nursing survival skills such as assertiveness, communication, advocacy, and building self-esteem.

The mini-lectures and workshop topics included pharmacology, medication dosage calculation, neurology, physiology, cardiovascular, electrolyte imbalances, nursing process, anxiety, and personality disorders. ELAC conducted 125 mini- lectures and nursing workshops with an average of 10-12 nursing students per class. Mini lectures during this reporting period included the first class of 10 Health Care Workforce Development Program LVN-to-RN students.

Below are two charts identifying the number of ELAC nursing students that participated in the DHS program. The second chart provides the number of graduates during the period April 1 - November 30, 2004; however, the NCLEX-RN exam report has not been received by ELAC and therefore, the pass rate is not available. The first time pass rate from the previous reporting period (January 5 - April 4, 2004) was 96.15%. This pass rate (March 2004) was the highest documented NCLEX-RN rate received from ELAC students to date.

<b>DHS – ELAC ENROLLMENT</b>	
QUARTER (Dates)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN QUARTER
Spring Break, Spring Second Quarter, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Summer and Fall 2004, (first quarter) sessions (April 5 – November 30, 2004).	281

<b>NCLEX-RN PASS RATES</b>					
QUARTER	GRADUATING STUDENTS	STUDENTS PASSING NCLEX-RN	STUDENTS FAILING NCLEX-RN	NCLEX-RN NOT TAKEN	PASS RATE (%)
Spring Break, Spring Second Quarter, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Summer and Fall 2004, (first quarter) sessions (April 5 - November 30, 2004).	36	Not Available*	Not Available*	Not Available*	Not Available*

\*NCLEX report not provided from the State as of November 30, 2004

**DHS ELAC Recruitment Activities/Events:**

- 04/19/04 – ELAC Nurse Intern Presentation.
- 05/14/04 – ELAC Nurse Recruitment Senior Breakfast and Tours.
- 06/05/04 – ELAC Nursing Program Graduation and Pinning Ceremony.
- 06/16/04 – ELAC Nursing Program Summer Semester Kick-Off with DHS Presentation.
- 08/30/04 – ELAC Nursing Program Fall Semester Kick-Off with DHS Presentation.
- 10/20/04 – ELAC Nursing Presentation – “Resumes and Nursing Employment Opportunities at LAC+USC”.
- 10/22/04 – ELAC students attended the DHS New Grad reception at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

#### ELAC Applicants/Hires:

During this reporting period, 12 applications were received from ELAC students listing the following exam titles: Clinic Nursing Attendant II (1), Medical Services Coordinator (1), Nurse Practitioner (1), Nursing Instructor (1), Public Health Nurse (1), Senior Nursing Instructor (1), Senior and Student Worker, Nursing (4), and Utilization Review Nurse (2).

#### Joint Nursing Shortage Committee

The DHS Recruitment and Examining Office's Nurse Recruiters meeting serves as the forum for discussing and planning nurse recruitment and retention activities within the Department. The September 23, 2004 meeting marked the beginning of regular meeting attendance by nurse recruitment representatives from the Departments of Mental Health and Sheriff at this committee.

Over the past six months, this committee has collaborated and made decisions on job fair attendance for Nurse Recruiters, the 2005 Nurse Recognition Week activities, distribution of a recruitment post card to all nurses in southern California, and updated the county-wide Nurse Tuition Reimbursement policy. These activities either influenced the recruitment or the retention of DHS nurses.

#### Availability Of Federal And State Funds That May Be Utilized To Enhance The County's Nurse Training, Recruitment, And Retention Efforts

HCWDP continues to utilize available Federal/State Workforce Investment Act grant funds to provide ongoing nursing skills upgrade, certification, and long-term nursing career training programs. State funding support for this training will continue until the end of FY 2004-05, with the possibility of an extension of this funding through December 2005.

#### Retraining Programs For Non-Nursing Employees Interested In Becoming Nurses

In addition to the two-year RN training program at El Camino Community for 32 non-nursing DHS employees, the HCWDP sponsored five other non-nursing employees for LVN training at St. Francis Career College. The training concluded in October 2004 and the graduating students are now being prepared to pass the State exam for LVN licensure. Twenty-eight other non-nursing employees continue their HCWDP-sponsored LVN training at LAC+USC's School of Nursing and Allied Health and at Olive View/UCLA Medical Center. This training started on March 23, 2004 and is scheduled to finish September 16, 2005. As stated previously, HCWDP is committed to providing coaching, tutoring, and other assistance to ensure successful completion of these long-term training programs and attainment of a license to practice as LVNs or RNs.

#### Tutoring And Mentoring Programs For The Northern County Area

Two tutoring and mentoring programs have been established in northern Los Angeles County area. Both programs, Glendale Community College in Glendale, and Los Angeles Valley College in Van Nuys, have been in existence for one year. With completion of this item, the subject of Tutoring and Mentoring Programs for the Northern County area will be considered completed and deleted from future DHS Nursing Recruitment, Retention, and Training Activities reports.

**Nurse Faculty Grant Program To Enhance Nursing School Recruitment Efforts**

No new reportable activity.

**Preparing Employed Nursing Students For The NCLEX For Registered Nurses**

The Health Care Workforce Development Program (HCWDP) is currently preparing nine employees who recently graduated from the LVN-to-RN training program at ELAC and nine other nursing graduate employees to take and pass the NCLEX-RN exam administered by the State for RN licensure. Two of the employees have already passed the exam, while most of the other graduates will be taking the NCLEX-RN exam at the end of December 2004. HCWDP is also preparing the five recent St. Francis Career College LVN graduating students to take the NCLEX-LVN exam.

The Department will be providing you future reports on a bi-annual basis. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know.

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